

HERMAN HINRICHS

DEC 7 1941

AFTER EATING BREAKFAST I DECIDED TO SOAK MY WHITES WHICH I HAD WORN ASHORE IN HONOLULU THE DAY BEFORE, WHILE AT MASS. I WAS JUST GETTING THEM OUT OF MY LOCKER ON THE SECOND DECK MIDSHIPS PORT SIDE, WHEN OVER THE SPEAKER SOME ONE SAID "AIR RAID NO SHIT THEY ARE BOMBING HICKAM FIELD".

I IMMEDIATELY RAN THRU THE BULL RING TO STARBOARD AND DOWN TO BOILER CONTROL MY BATTLE STATION. SWEDE HANSON WT3c SAID HE NEEDED HELP. I WENT WITH HIM TO #2 FIRE ROOM. WE WENT THRU THE AIR LOCKS ONLY TO FIND THE FIRE ROOM FLOODING. WE RETREATED BACK THRU THE AIR LOCKS AND HEADED BACK TO BOILER CONTROL. THE SHIP WAS OVER PRETTY FAR AT THIS POINT. WHEN WE GOT TO BOILER CONTROL, NOONE WAS THERE. I BELIEVE THEY HEARD ABANDON SHIP WHICH SWEDE AND I DID NOT HEAR. WE WORKED OUR WAY BACK TO THE SECOND DECK. BY THIS TIME ALL HATCHES WERE UNDER WATER. THERE WAS A PORT HOLE OPEN SO I LEFT THRU IT. I LOST MY CLOTHES I WAS WEARING GOING THRU IT.

COMING OUT SOME PAINT FLEW AND I KNEW WE WERE BEING STRAFED. I IMMEDIATELY DOVE DOWN AND SWAM UNDER WATER ONLY COMING UP TO GET AIR. I DID THIS ALL THE WAY TO THE USS MARYLAND. THEY HAD LINES HANGING DOWN AND I TRIED GOING UP HAND OVER HAND. I WAS SO OILY I MUST HAVE SLIPPED FOUR OR FIVE TIMES BEFORE I MADE IT. THEY PUT ME TO WORK PASSING AMMUNITION.

AFTER THE BOMBING WAS OVER SOME OFFICER DIDN'T WANT US OILY GUYS ON HIS SHIP SO HE HAD US PUT ASHORE ON FORD ISLAND.

I PICKED UP A PAIR OF PANTS AND A SHIRT THAT WAS LAYING ON THE BEACH. I WAS THEN ASSIGNED TO A "CAVE TUNNEL" UNDER A HOME ON THE NORTH SIDE OF FORD ISLAND. WE HAD A LOT OF WOMEN AND KIDS THERE. THEY DROPPED A MACHINE GUN OFF THERE AND WE WERE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT THE WOMEN AND KIDS. I WAS THERE UNTIL DEC 9 WHEN THEY PICKED US UP AND TOOK US TO THE SUB-BASE. THERE WE SHOWERED, ATE AND WERE REASSIGNED. I WENT TO THE USS HELENA

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YOU ASKED FOR MY EXPERIENCE ON 12/7/41. WELL, I WAS A SNIPE. WE DON'T SEE ANYTHING, OR KNOW ANYTHING, SO DON'T BLAME ME FOR IT.

MY BUNK WAS 2nd DECK MIDSHIP PORT SIDE. AFTER BREAKFAST I HAD TIME TO KILL BEFORE MASS WHICH WAS 8 A.M. SO I DECIDED TO SOAK MY WHITES WHILE I WAS AT MASS. I WAS JUST TAKING MY WHITES OUT OF MY LOCKER WHEN IT CAME OVER THE LOUD SPEAKER, "AIR RAID NO DHTT THEYARE BOMBING HICKAM FIELD" I IMMEDIATELY RAN THRU THE BULL RING TO THE STARBOARD SIDE AND DOWN TO BOILER CONTROL ON 3rd DECK. THAT WAS MY BATTLE STATION.

HARRY "SWEDE" HANSON SAID HE NEEDED HELP FOR #2 FIREROOM. I OFFERED TO HELP HIM AND ENSIGN HITTORF TOLD ME TO GO AHEAD. WE WENT TO #2 FIREROOM AIRLOCK AND WENT THRU ONLY TO SEE THE FIREROOM WAS FLOODING. WE RETREATED BACK THRU THE AIR LOCK AND THEN AFT TO BOILER CONTROL. WHE WE GOT TO BOILER CONTROL THERE WAS NO ONE THERE. WE THEN WENT UP THE LADDER TO THE SECOND DECK. BY THIS TIME HAD ROLLED OVER SO FAR THE HATCHES GOING TO MAIN DECK WERE UNDER WATER. THE PROT HOLES WERE OPEN AND WE KNEW THAT WAS OUR WAY OUT.

I STOOD ON THE HULL AND DOVE INTO THE WATER JUST AS A PLANE STRAFED THE HULL.. I SWAM UNDERWATER, COMING UP ONLY FOR AIR UNTIL I GOT TO THE USS MARYLAND. THEY HAD LINES HANGING DAWN AND I GRABBED ONE AND TRIED CLIMBING HAND OVER HAND. I SLID DOWN SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE I MADE IT ABOARD. I HELPED PASS AMMUNITION FOR THE REST OF THE BOMBING.. WHEN THE BOMBING WAS OVER, AN OFFICER TOLD US OILY GUYS TO GO ASHORE TO FORD ISLAND. ON FORD ISLAND I WAS ASSIGNED UP TO A HOME ON THE NORTHWEST SIDE OF THE ISLAND THAT HAD A TUNNEL FROM THE BASEMENT TO THE SHORE. WE HAD WOMEN AND KIDS IN THRE AND WE WERE TO PROTECT THEM. I WAS THERE UNTIL TUESDAY WHEN THEY TOOK US OVER TO THE SUB BASE. THERE WE SHOWERED, WERE ISSUED SKIVIES, DUNGAREES, SHOES AND HAT, AND FED.

LATE ON TUESDAY I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE U.S.S. HELENA.

THAT'S ABOUT IT AND I CAN SAY I NEVER SAW A JAP PLANE THAT DAY.

HERMAN HINRICHS F3c

U.S.S. OKIE